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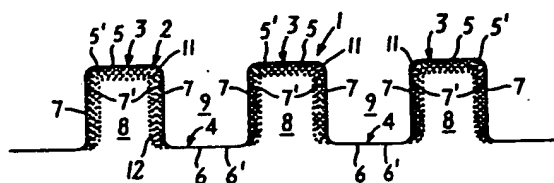
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(54) Fuel cell catalyst member and method of making same.

(57) A fuel cell catalyst member formed from a metallic plate to whose surface is electrophoretically applied a porous support layer of ceramic material into which is impregnated an active catalyst material.



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FUEL CELL CATALYST MEMBER AND METHOD OF MAKING SAME

Background of the Invention

This invention relates to fuel cell construction and, in particular, to a method of preparing a catalyst plate for use in, in situ, reforming of process fuels such as hydrocarbons and alcohols.

It has been recognized that in fuel cell operation, particularly, high temperature fuel cell operation such as found in molten carbonate and solid oxide cells, the heat generated can be used to reform the hydrocarbon content of the fuel cell process gas. The hydrocarbon content of fuel cell process gas frequently contains methane and other hydrocarbons such as, for example, propane, methanol, ethanol and other reformable organic fuels, and as used herein is also intended to include alcohols. The heat value on a mole basis, and, hence, electrical energy producing potential of methane is about three to four times greater than that of hydrogen. Since methane itself is relatively electrochemically inactive, it is very desirable to reform methane to form hydrogen and carbon monoxide in accordance with the reaction:

$$\text{CH}_4 + \text{H}_2\text{O} \longrightarrow 3\text{H}_2 + \text{CO}$$
The hydrogen and carbon monoxide can then participate in the fuel cell reaction either directly or by a further water-gas shift. An incentive for carrying out such reforming reaction in a fuel cell is that the reaction is endothermic and would serve to offset heat generated in fuel cell operation due to inherent irreversibility.

U.S. patent 3,488,226 discloses a fuel cell construction wherein reforming of process gas hydrocarbons is carried out in situ by placement of a suitable catalyst in direct heat exchange relationship to the cell. In this construction,

1 the catalyst is in the form of nickel alumina-aluminum pellets
of approximately one-half inch in diameter. These pellets are
produced by crushing a nickel aluminum alloy and treating the
resulting particles with a sodium hydroxide solution. The
5 resultant mixture is maintained at its boiling point and allowed
to undergo conversion of the aluminum to sodium aluminate and
alumina. After the desired conversion, the reaction is quenched
with water. Subsequent washings with water are followed by
washings with methanol and the resultant pellets, thereafter,
10 are stored in methanol.

U.S. patent 4,182,795, assigned to the same
assigned hereof, discloses an improved construction wherein
in situ hydrocarbon reforming is via a catalyst placed in an
electrolyte-isolated passage, this passage being in heat
15 transfer relationship with the cell. Such placement of the
catalyst prevents electrolyte condensation which would
normally occur in an electrolyte-communicative passage at
cold spots created by the endothermic reforming reaction.
The process gas in the electrolyte-isolated passage also
20 acts as a cooling means so that cooling of the cell and
reforming are simultaneously brought about by the single
passage.

Disposition of the catalyst in the '795 patent
construction is in layered or packed form on a plate defining
25 the electrolyte-isolated passage. The configuration of
the catalyst coated plate is U-shaped or corrugated with
the catalyst being placed on the upper plate walls.

Finally, the '795 patent also mentions that a
suitable catalyst for reforming methane hydrocarbon content
30 is nickel or nickel based and that a commercially available

1 version of such catalyst is Girdler G-56 which is provided
in pellet form for packing in fixed bed type reactors.

Other practices, not specifically directed to in
5 situ reforming in a fuel cell, but directed to forming cata-
lyst members for hydrocarbon reforming in other applications
are also known. U.S. patent 4,019,969 teaches a method for
manufacturing catalytic tubes in which a metallic sponge is
formed on the inner wall of a metallic tube by electrolysis.
The sponge is then impregnated with appropriate salts of
10 catalytic and ceramic substances and the assembly then
roasted to provide the desired catalytic member.

U.S. patent 3,186,957 teaches a technique for
forming pellet catalysts in which a slurry of alpha alumina
hydrate and a soluble nickel salt are coprecipitated and,
15 thereafter, the product calcinated at a low temperature to
produce nickel oxide supported on a ceramic oxide (alumina).
The coprecipitate is then formed into suitable pellet shapes
and heated at a high temperature to establish a nickel alumi-
nate interface between the nickel oxide and the ceramic oxide.

20 In U.S. patent 3,498,927 the starting material is
a refractory oxide material which is gelled and to which is
added, before or after gelling, a catalytic metal. The gel
of the catalytic metal supported on the refractory material
is then applied to a ceramic support structure, either by
25 spraying or immersing. The product is then dried and
calcinated to form the resultant catalyst.

U.S. patent 3,645,915 discloses a technique in
which a catalyst comprised of nickel oxide, nickel chromite
and a stabilizer are placed in a slurry form and the slurry
30 applied to a refractory oxide or metallic support by impreg-

1 nation or cementing. The resultant product is then calcined.
When the support is metallic, the support may be roughened
to provide an anchor for the applied materials.

5 U.S. patent 3,513,109 discloses use of a slurry of
catalytic material and metal amines and application of same
to a refractory support. The slurry also may be provided
with a refractory interspersant prior to applying the slurry
to support. Such application may be by spraying or dipping
and is followed by drying and subsequent calcination.

10 U.S. patent 3,627,790 teaches formation of a Raney
nickel (Ni-Al_3) type catalyst by partially leaching aluminum
from a nickel-aluminum alloy. This type catalyst is to be
used for hydrogenation at the fuel cell anode and not for
reforming. A further U.S. patent, 4,024,075, discloses a
15 cobalt based catalyst for low temperature operation with-
out significant carbon deposition.

While the above patents and practices for making
catalysts have proved useful in the formation of certain
forms of catalyst members, i.e., pellets, honeycombs, tubular
20 structures, further practices are still being investigated
as regards formation of such members to meet the stringent
requirements of in situ fuel cell reforming. In such re-
forming the following conditions must be satisfied: a)
the catalyst must adhere to a metallic plate having an
25 extended continuous surface; b) the catalyst must be able
to provide satisfactory reforming rates in the range of
1000°F to 1300°F and 1-10 atm operating pressure; c) the
catalyst must be stable in the presence of fuel cell elec-
trolyte and at cell operating temperatures; d) the catalyst
30 should permit operation at low steam-to-carbon (s/c) ratios

1 e) the catalyst should provide long term operation before
regeneration is required, since regeneration may affect cell
anode stability; f) the catalyst should provide low ohmic
resistance; g) the catalyst should have crushing strength
5 sufficient to withstand cell sealing pressures; and h) the
catalyst should enable reasonable heat exchange.

It is a primary object of the present invention to
provide an improved fuel cell catalyst member and practice
for in situ reforming of process fuels.

10 It is a further object of the present invention to
provide a practice for realizing a fuel cell catalyst member
meeting the above-mentioned requirements.

It is a further object of the present invention to
provide a catalyst member of the aforesaid type which is
15 adaptable for use in molten carbonate and solid oxide fuel
cells.

Summary of the Invention

In accordance with the principles of the present
invention, the above and other objectives are realized in a
20 practice in which a metallic fuel cell plate having an extended
continuous surface is provided on such continuous surface with
an electrophoretically deposited porous support layer of
ceramic or refractory material and an active catalyst material
capable of endothermic reforming is impregnated into the
25 support layer.

In accordance with the embodiment of the inven-
tion to be described hereinafter, the metallic plate is
first surface treated to provide a desired flatness and
surface area promotive of adherence of the ceramic support
30 material. Support material is then directly deposited on

1 the plate by electrophoretic deposition. Following such
deposition, the catalyst material is impregnated into the
fine pores of the support material, preferably, by dipping
the plate into a solution of the catalyst material. The
5 impregnated plate is then dried and the dried plate acti-
vated by subjecting the plate to hydrogen or other reducing
gas such as cracked ammonia under controlled heating. If
desired, the activated plate may then be further processed
by a final surface treatment which removes any insulating
10 layer on the plate contact areas.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The above and other features and aspects of the
present invention will become more apparent upon reading the
following detailed description in conjunction with the
15 accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 illustrates a catalyst member in accordance
with the principles of the present invention;

FIG. 2 shows a flow diagram of a method for
fabricating the catalyst member of FIG. 1;

20 FIG. 3 illustrates total catalyst and support
layer thickness along the length of the catalyst member for
various angles of catalyst impregnation; and

FIG. 4 shows a comparison curve for the reforming
achieved with the present catalyst member as compared to a
25 conventional member.

Detailed Description

In FIG. 1, a fuel cell catalyst member 1 comprises
a corrugated metallic plate or sheet 2 which, typically, might
be stainless steel. The plate 2 includes crests regions 3
30 and valley regions 4 defined by extended continuous top

1 plate sections 5, bottom plate sections 6 and side plate
s ctions 7. The crests regions 3 define flow passages 8 for
a first fuel process gas having a high hydrocarbon content
such as, for example, methane, which is to be reformed to
5 hydrogen as the process gas moves through these passages.
The valley regions 4, in turn, define further flow passages
9 for a second fuel process gas including already reformed
process gas and, therefore, of a higher hydrogen content
than the first gas. This second gas is the fuel gas for the
10 cell anode and undergoes electrochemical reaction in passage
through the cell. The catalyst member is of the type used
to provide the unipolar and bipolar plates (120, 124 and
130) of FIGS. 7-9 of the aforementioned 4,182,795 patent.

In accordance with the invention, the catalyst
15 member 1 is further provided on preselected surfaces of
the regions 5, 6 and 7 with a porous catalyst support layer
11 of ceramic or refractory material. In particular, such
support material is disposed on the surfaces of these regions
defining the crest regions 3, i.e., on the lower surfaces 5'
20 and the side surfaces 7' of the regions 5 and 7, respectively,
and is directly applied by electrophoresis, as will be ex-
plained in greater detail hereinbelow. Preferable support
materials are refractory or ceramic oxides such as oxides,
aluminates, titanates and zirconates of suitable metals hav-
25 ing a surface area in the range of 1 to 30 m²/g. A more
preferable material is lithium aluminate.

In further accord with the invention, the catalyst
member 1 further comprises an active catalyst material 12
which is impregnated into the support layer 11 such that the
30 active material is supported on the layer 11 ceramic particles.

1 A preferable catalyst material is nickel, while other catalyst
materials such as, for example, Ni-Co alloy or cobalt, might
also be employed. Surface area of the catalyst material is
preferably in the range of 0.1 to 10 m²/g.

5 With the catalyst member 1 formed with the electrophoretically deposited support layer 11 and with the active catalyst 12 impregnated into the pores of such layer, a significant enhancement in active material retention and a corresponding benefit in reforming activity is realized.

10 The overall structure thus provides effective reformation, while remaining stable in the fuel cell environment.

As can be appreciated, the catalyst member 1 can take on various configurations other than the configuration specifically illustrated. Common to these configurations

15 will be the construction of plate and catalyst impregnated electrophoretically deposited support layer in catalyst member regions communicating with the gas to be reformed. Whether all such regions or just a number of such regions will be provided with a catalyst layer will depend upon the

20 particular application and the degree of reforming reaction required. It is contemplated under the invention that such layer might also be applied to the surfaces of the regions 6 and 7 defining the valley regions 9, if the gas passing through such valley regions also has hydrocarbon content

25 to be reformed. It is further contemplated that regions of the catalyst member serving to make electrical contact with other regions of the fuel cell, such as, for example, the bottom surfaces 6' of the regions 6, be free of the catalyst layer to promote good electrical contact.

30 FIG. 2 shows a flow diagram of a method for

1 fabricating the catalyst member 1 in accordance with the
principles of the present invention. Such fabrication, as
a first step, contemplates initial processing or surface
treating of the metallic plate 2 to ensure flatness and
5 surface area sufficient to obtain adherence of the catalyst
support layer 11. Flatness and surface area in the respec-
tive ranges of ± 3 mils and 2 to 10 cm^2/cm^2 are usable with
more desirable ranges being ± 0.5 mils and 3 to 5 cm^2/cm^2 .

10 In preferred practice, the aforesaid initial
processing includes an annealing step in which the metallic
member is heated at a temperature in the range of from about
1800-2100°F in a hydrogen atmosphere for a period of about 2
to 4 hours. Annealing provides stress relief under static
load and yields a resultant corrugated metallic plate of
15 extreme flatness.

Following the annealing procedure the initial
processing continues with sand blasting or chemical etching
of the plate surface to increase surface area. At this
point, the initial processing may be terminated and the
20 support material deposited or the initial processing may be
continued with a further stress relieving practice either
through further annealing, as previously described, or
through flattening at pressures in the range of 0.5 to 1.0
ton/sq. in. area.

25 After initial processing, application of the
catalyst support layer 11 follows. In accordance with the
invention, support material is applied by electrophoretic,
deposition, a preferable support material being lithium
aluminate. In the case of the latter support material,
30 an emulsion of a suitable solvent such as, for example,

1 isopropanol containing a dispersing agent such as a cationic
surfactant is prepared with lithium aluminate being supplied
in an amount of about 50 to 90 mg. of lithium aluminate per
cc. of isopropanol. Electrophoretic deposition of the
5 emulsion is performed at voltages in the range of 500-700
volts at a current density of 1-2 mA/cm² for 20-50 seconds.
The resultant deposited layer under such conditions will
exhibit an acceptable porosity of 60-90% porosity and a good
bond strength and stability.

10 Subsequent to deposition of the support material,
the active material is impregnated. Preferably, this
process follows immediately after (i.e., within about one to
two minutes of) the deposition of the support material to
prevent flaking of the electrophoretically deposited layer.
15 Active material is nickel or a nickel alloy of surface area
in the range of 1-5 m²/g and a preferable material is
nickel with Co as a promoter. Impregnation can be by any
conventional impregnation technique so as to fill the fine
pores of the support material. A typical technique might be
20 chemical deposition of a salt of active material by horizon-
tal dipping or soaking of the plate in a solution contain-
ing the active material. Soaking efficiency preferably can be
improved by first applying a vacuum over the plate and then
contacting the active material solution. Where nickel is
25 the active material, a solution of nickel salt can be used.
Typical salts might be Ni(NO₃)₂, NiSO₄, NiCO₃, nickel
formate or acetate or combinations thereof. To this solution
might also be added a volatile base such as, for example,
(NH₄)₂ CO₃ or NH₄OH.

30 The impregnated catalyst member is then subjected



1 to drying. Preferably air drying is used and continues for
a period of 2-4 hours. Drying is further preferably carried
out to provide uniformity in the catalyst layer. Horizontal
disposition of the structure during drying provides the
5 desired uniformity.

After drying has been completed, the catalyst
material is activated. This can be done either with the
catalyst member in situ or prior to the fuel cell construction.
In the latter case, the member is placed in a hydrogen
10 atmosphere under controlled heating whose rate is dependent
on the active material applied and its melting point.

At this point, fabrication of the catalyst member
1 is complete with the exception of removal of applied
layered material in plate areas where the layers are not
15 desired. In particular, it is desirable to remove the
layers from plate areas where a good and uniform electrical
contact with other components of the cell is desired. Such
removal can typically be carried out by scraping or some
other equivalent material removal technique.

20 In the above-described procedure, drying of the
impregnated catalyst was carried out with the plate 2 in
horizontal orientation in order to obtain a uniform concen-
tration and, therefore, uniform activity of the catalyst
over the length of the plate. If other than a uniform
25 concentration is desired then the plate can be inclined at
various angles to the horizontal to obtain the desired
non-uniformity. Thus, for example, if a larger concentra-
tion of the catalyst were desired at the input gas end of
the plate relative to the output gas end, then the plate would
30 be inclined during drying so as to situate the input end at a

1 lower position than the output end (FIG. 3). If, on the other
hand, a larger concentration were desired at the output end
relative to the input end, the inclination of the plate would
be reversed, i.e., the input end would be situated at a higher
5 position than the output end. FIG. 3 pictorially shows
catalyst concentration along the plate 2 length for the
horizontal drying case and the above inclined drying cases.

With respect to impregnation of the catalyst
layer, it also should be noted that promoters can be added
10 to the catalyst layer in order to improve activity. Thus,
materials such as, for example, Co, Cr, Mg, Mn, Ce and rare
earth materials can be added. These materials may be in
oxide form or elemental.

Using the above-described process, a number of
15 catalyst members were constructed as illustrated by the
following examples.

Example I

In this example, a catalyst member with uniform
catalyst concentration was obtained.

A) Initial Plate Surface Treating:

20 A lightweight corrugated SS sheet metal plate
(6.5" x 6.5") was annealed at temperatures of 1850°F in H₂
atmosphere for 3 hours. This stress relieving under static
load yielded a very flat plate which is desirable for
25 adherence of the support layer.

The annealed SS plate was then sand blasted to
increase its surface area for enhancing the bond with the
support material. The SS plate was then cold pressed (0.6
ton/sq. in. area) prior to the deposition of the support
30 material.

1 B) Support Layer Application:

5 Lithium aluminate support material was then
electrophoretically deposited on the plate. The surface
area of the lithium aluminate used was $17 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ as deter-
mined by the BET method. An intimate emulsion of lithium
aluminate in isopropanol using 1 wt% of Doumeen TDO
cationic surfactant was prepared. The emulsion had 78mg of
 LiAlO_2 per cc of isopropanol. The electrophoretic deposi-
tion of the high surface area lithium aluminate on the
10 sheet metal was performed at 530 volts and a current of
396mA for 30 seconds. Using the above conditions, a deposited
support layer having approximately 70% porosity was obtained.
The total weight of lithium aluminate was 6.4 gm.

15 C) Catalyst Layer Application

Nickel active material was then impregnated into
the fine pores of the lithium aluminate support layer. This
was done by dipping (horizontal soaking) in a concentrated
(3.4M) solution of $(\text{NiNO}_3 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O})$. Methanol also
could have been used.

20 The dipping was carried out immediately after
electrophoretic deposition to prevent flaking. With 3.4 M
 $\text{NiNO}_3 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ solution, a soaking time of 4 hours
yielded approximately 24gm. loading of the salt.

25 It is undesirable to use water as a solvent
because it may attack the porous support layer. NiSO_4 may
be used but the H_2S produced during in situ activation can
poison the nickel anode. However, it may be used for a
specific case of internal reformer where the reforming is
done in an isolated chamber.

30 D) Drying:

1 Air drying of the impregnated catalyst plate structure for 3 hours was performed before its activation. Drying in the horizontal position yielded very uniform structure.

E) Activation:

5 An internal reformer was built incorporating this catalyst member. The catalyst was activated in situ in an H_2 atmosphere under a controlled heating rate. 700 cc/min. of hydrogen and a heating rate of 1 C/min. were used. The heating rate influences the stability of catalyst structure (the flaking or sintering due to melting). The rate will vary depending upon the salt composition and its melting point.

10 FIG. 4 shows the improved performance in fuel cell reforming realized with the fabricated catalyst member operated under molten carbonate fuel cell operating conditions. As can be seen from the solid line curve, 90 percent reforming of methane was realized when using the catalyst member of the invention, as compared to the less than 10 percent reforming realized when the member was not used.

Example II

20 In this case, the steps of the preceding example were followed except that drying was carried out by inclining the plate so as to obtain impregnated catalyst of graded concentration and, therefore, graded activity.

25 It should be noted that, utilizing the practice of the present invention, the resultant support layer with impregnated catalyst can be of relatively thin dimension. Typically, layers as thin as 10 to 100 mils are realizable.

30 In all cases, it is understood that the above-described arrangements and practices are merely illustrative of the many possible specific embodiments which represent

1 applications of the present invention. Numerous and varied
other arrangements can readily be devised in accordance with
the principles of the present invention without departing
from the spirit and scope of the invention. Thus, for
5 example, as an alternative to the material removal step, the
application of support material and active material can
be carried out selectively by screening or some other means so
as to provide application only in the desired plate areas.

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We Claim

1. A fuel cell catalyst member for use in a fuel cell which receives process gas containing hydrocarbon content, said member reforming said hydrocarbon content through communication between said process gas and said member, said member comprising:
- 5 a metallic plate having a continuous surface of extended dimension;
- a porous support layer of ceramic material electrophoretically deposited on said surface;
- 10 and an active catalyst material dispersed in said support layer.
2. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 1 wherein:
- said ceramic material is a ceramic oxide.
3. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 2 wherein:
- said ceramic material is one of oxides, aluminates, titanates and zirconates of metals.
4. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 3 wherein:
- said ceramic material is lithium aluminate.
5. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 4 wherein:
- said active material contains nickel;
- and said metallic plate contains stainless steel.
6. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 1 wherein:
- said active catalyst material is uniformly dispersed in said support layer.



7. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 1 wherein:

said active catalyst is non-uniformly dispersed in said support layer.

8. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 1 wherein:

said support layer is on preselected portions of said surface.

9. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 1 wherein:

said plate has opposing upper and lower surfaces which comprise said surface.

10. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 9 wherein:

said support layer is on both said upper and lower surfaces.

11. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 9 wherein:

said support layer is exclusively on one of said upper and lower surfaces.

12. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 9 wherein:

said metallic plate is corrugated and includes crest regions and valley regions;

5 and said support material is on said lower surface in said crest regions.

13. A fuel cell in accordance with claim 12 wherein:

said support material is excluded from said lower surface in said valley regions.

14. A method of producing a catalyst member for in

situ reforming of the hydrocarbon content of process gas of a fuel cell comprising the steps of:

electrophoretically depositing a porous support layer of ceramic material to a continuous surface of extended dimension of a metallic plate;

and impregnating said support layer with an active catalyst material capable of reforming said hydrocarbon content of said fuel gas.

15. A method in accordance with claim 14 wherein said method further includes:

drying said impregnated plate.

16. A method in accordance with claim 15 further comprising:

activating said applied catalyst.

17. A method in accordance with claim 14 wherein:

the support material is an emulsion;

and electrophoresis is at a voltage in the range of 500-700 volts and at a current density of 1-2 mA/cm² for a period of about 20-50 seconds.

18. A method in accordance with claim 17 wherein:

said emulsion comprises lithium aluminate and a solvent.

19. A method in accordance with claim 18 wherein:

said solvent is isopropanol and the emulsion contains about 50 to 90 mg. of lithium aluminate per cc of isopropanol.

20. A method in accordance with claim 15 or 16 wherein:

said impregnation is by soaking in a solution containing the active material.

21. A method in accordance with claim 20 wherein:

soaking is carried out with the plate held horizontally to obtain uniform concentration of catalyst material in said support layer.

22. A method in accordance with claim 20 wherein:

said soaking is carried out with said plate inclined to the horizontal to obtain a non-uniform concentration of catalyst material in said support layer.

23. A method in accordance with claim 20 wherein:

said soaking is carried out by first applying a vacuum on the plate, and then contacting the solution containing active material.

24. A method in accordance with claim 20 wherein:

said active material comprises nickel.

25. A method in accordance with claim 24 wherein:

said solution is a nickel salt solution.

26. A method in accordance with claim 24 wherein:

said salt solution contains $\text{Ni}(\text{NO}_3)_2$.

27. A method in accordance with claim 24 wherein:

said salt solution contains NiSO_4 .

28. A method in accordance with claim 24 wherein:

said salt solution contains nickel formate or nickel acetate.

29. A method in accordance with claim 14 further including:

prior to depositing said support layer, treating the surface of said plate to provide a desired flatness and surface area.

30. A method in accordance with claim 29 wherein:

said treating of said plate provides a plate surface area of from about $2 \text{ cm}^2/\text{cm}^2$ to $10 \text{ cm}^2/\text{cm}^2$.

- 1 31. A method in accordance with claim 30 wherein:
treating of said plate provides a plate flatness
of ± 0.5 to ± 3 mils.
- 5 32. A method in accordance with claim 31 wherein:
treating said plate includes annealing said plate.
33. A method in accordance with claim 32 wherein:
annealing is carried out at a temperature of about
1800°-2100°F in a hydrogen atmosphere for a period of about
2 to 4 hours.
- 10 34. A method in accordance with claim 32 wherein:
treating said plate further includes sand blasting
said plate subsequent to said annealing operation.
35. A method in accordance with claim 34 wherein:
treating said plate further includes further
15 annealing said plate subsequent to said sand blasting
operation.
36. A method in accordance with claim 34 wherein:
treating said plate further includes flattening
said plate at pressures in a range of 0.5 to 1-0 tons/sq.
20 in. area subsequent to said sand blasting.
37. A method in accordance with claim 14 further
comprising:
drying said impregnated plate, said drying
being for a period of about 2 to 4 hours.
- 25 38. A method in accordance with claim 37 wherein:
drying is with air.
39. A method in accordance with claim 14 further
comprising:
activating said catalyst material.
- 30 40. A method in accordance with claim 16 or 39 wherein:

activating comprises subjecting the plate to a hydrogen atmosphere under controlled heating.

41. A method in accordance with claim 40 wherein:
the quantity of hydrogen is about 0.5 - 1.0 cc/min-cm², heated at a rate of about 0.5° - 2° C/min.

42. A method in accordance with claim 14 further comprising:

removing said support layer and said active catalyst from selected areas of said surface.

43. A method in accordance with claim 14 wherein:
said depositing of said support layer and application of said active catalyst material is to selected areas of said surface.

44. A method in accordance with claim 14 wherein:
said plate has first and second opposing surfaces which form said surface.

45. A method in accordance with claim 44 wherein:
said depositing is to said first and second surfaces.

46. A method in accordance with claim 45 wherein:
said depositing is exclusively to one of said first and second surfaces.

47. A method in accordance with claim 46 wherein:
said depositing is to preselected areas of said one surface.

48. A method in accordance with claim 14 wherein:
said porous support layer has a surface area in the range 1 to 30 m²/g.

49. A method in accordance with claim 14 or 48 wherein:
said active catalyst material has a surface area

1 in the range of 0.1 to 10 m²/g.

50. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with
claim 1 wherein:

5 said porous support layer has a surface area in
the range of 1 to 30 m²/g.

51. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with
claim 1 or 50 wherein:

said active catalyst material has a surface area
in the range of 0.1 to 10 m²/g.

10 52. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with claim 1
wherein:

said hydrocarbon content includes one of methane,
propane and alcohol.

15 53. A fuel cell catalyst member in accordance with
claim 52 wherein:

said alcohol includes one of methanol and ethanol.

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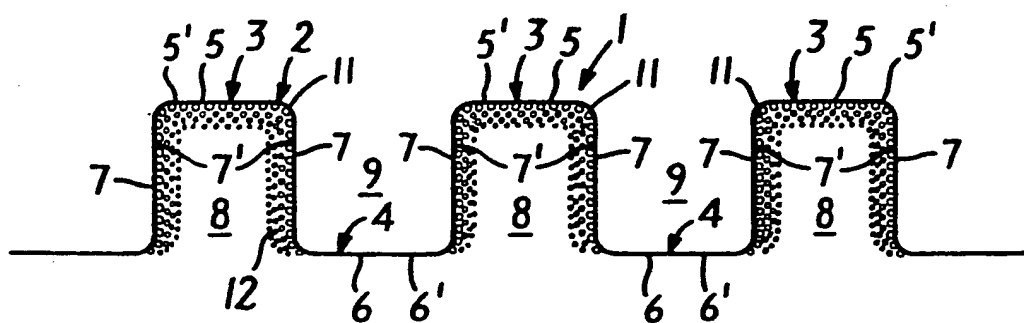
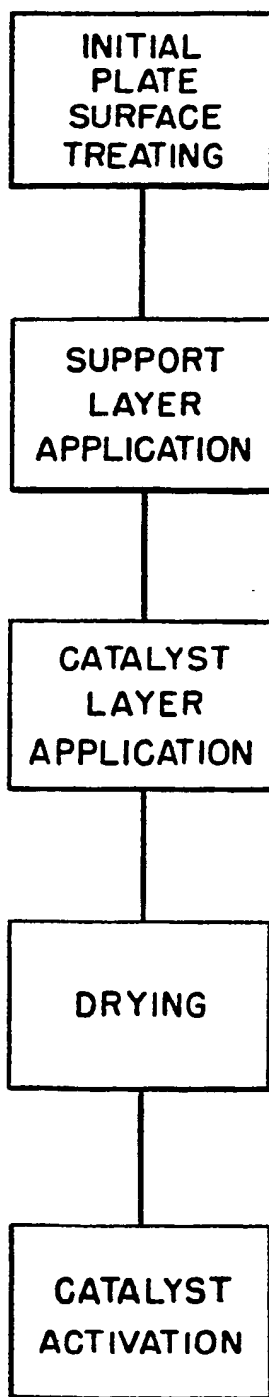
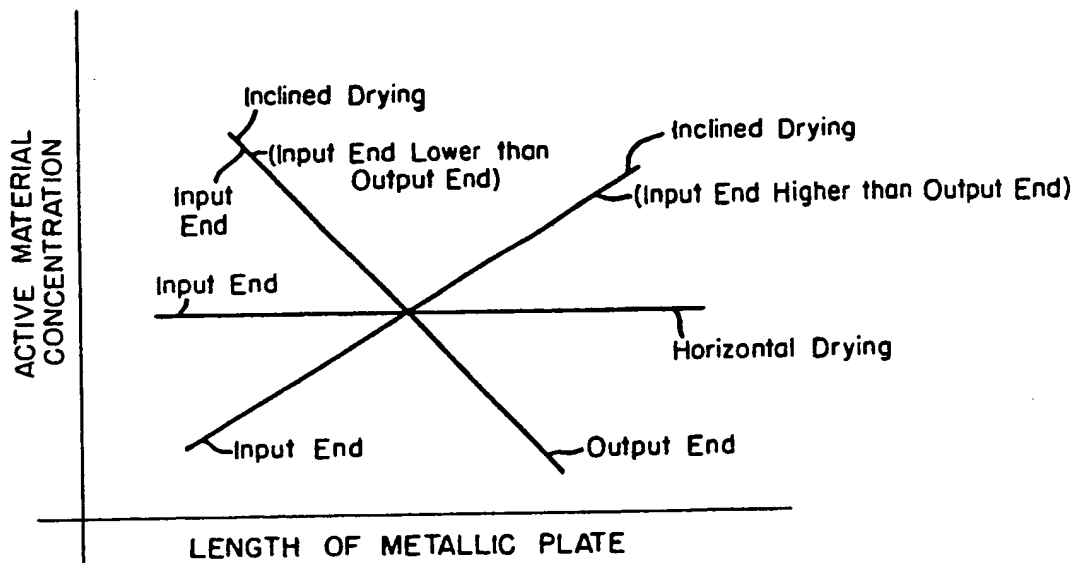


FIG. 1

**FIG. 2**

**FIG. 3**

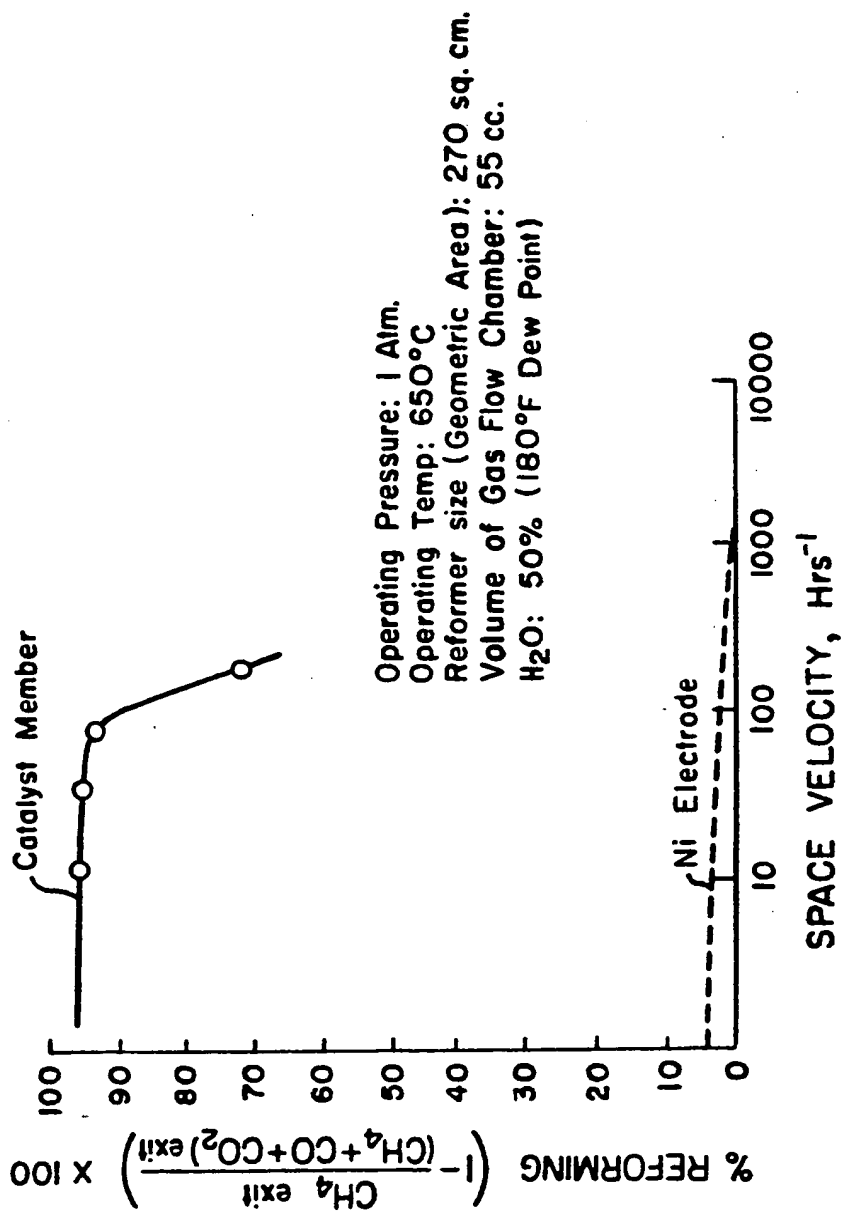


FIG. 4